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The reading instruction program of the Denver Public Schools is summarized. Objectives include teaching word recognition skills, developing the habit of reading, stimulating the desire for recreational reading, developing an interest in many types of reading material, teaching skills in making use of ideas gained in reading, and developing reading speed and efficiency.

In addition to defining the objectives and basic dimensions of the elementary reading program, this report also discusses the four component and interrelated stages of the program in action and the procedures used in organization of these stages. The Beginning Reading Program is designed to provide boys and girls with an earlier and more successful start in reading. The Basic Reading Program enables children to acquire the essential skills of effective reading through the use of a textbook. The Extended Reading Program is used to fix the habit of reading, to increase love of reading, and to sharpen skills learned in earlier stages. Finally, in the Applied Reading Program, pupils are taught to apply their reading skills to the study of content fields.

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Division of Instructional Services
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A REPORT TO THE
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# READING IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: SOME BASIC DIMENSIONS

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# READING IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: SOME BASIC DIMENSIONS

## I. OVERVIEW

### Reading in Contemporary Life

"Whether Johnny learns to read is no longer a matter of concern only to him, to his teachers, and to his parents. The national interest is now involved, and the subject has even come to Presidential attention. In the chapter on Goals in Education, printed with the Report of the President's Commission on National Goals, John W. Gardner pointed out that, 'Some subjects are more important than others. Reading is the most important of all'." This quotation is taken from an important new book in education, The Torchlighters, by Mary C. Austin and associates. It serves to underscore the fact that reading, far from being outmoded, is an attribute of civilized man which is becoming constantly more essential to his well-being.

The pressures to read well in modern life are increasingly insistent. All citizens need to keep abreast of rapidly changing conditions in the world and in the vocations through which they earn a living. One must become a continuing self-propelled reader, for reading has become a regular way of learning; in fact, reading has become a way of life. The ability to read well and widely--with self-reliance, independence, and discrimination--is indispensable to the successful man and the good citizen.

It is imperative that the outcomes of reading be comprehension

and critical thinking. The good life is enriched by reading--gaining information, appreciating the arts, developing a wide range of interests, improving tastes, and recognizing values. Reading provides vicariously the experiences a person needs to see through and resolve personal doubts and uncertainties. Attitudes develop and changes in behavior take place. One source of guidance toward being a responsible and contributive member of society is good reading.

Nearly two hundred years ago, the founders of this nation perceived that democracy could function and flourish only if every citizen gained the greatest possible degree of enlightenment and understanding. Today, despite the impact of mass media of communication, reading remains the chief and the indispensable source of enlightenment and understanding of a free people.

Reading in Modern Education

The concern of school people for teaching every child to read as well as his abilities permit is, of course, not new.

Reading is important not only as a tool to be employed in learning but as a means by which children can become responsible citizens imbued with high moral and spiritual values, capable of perpetuating and improving the ideals and practices considered fundamental to the life of the nation.

The pressures of our fast-changing times have moved educators to take a comprehensive and evaluative look at the processes and

methods by which reading is taught today. The deepest convictions of a society dedicated to the worth of the individual compel educators to deal with each child according to his own abilities. As Dr. Mary C. Austin points out, again in The Torchlighters, teachers must be competent to teach reading and programs of instruction must provide for teaching all the reading skills within the wide range of individual abilities from those of the retarded reader to those of the gifted reader.

In order that all children show growth in reading, each according to his own ability, a carefully planned sequential reading program together with continuous evaluation is necessary to adequate reading instruction.

A child who is reading well is a child who is thinking, not just saying the sounds of letters and words. Reading is, as previously indicated, a behavior of many facets. Necessarily, then, reading instruction comprises many interrelated elements. Reading authorities are agreed that there is no single way of learning to read and therefore no single way of teaching which will work equally well with all children. Hence, continual vigilance in seeking and selecting better ways is necessary to afford teachers the use of tools and techniques at the time they are needed.

Another evidence that reading affects the national welfare has been a National Policy Conference on Reading Instructior.

Some twenty-five authorities in reading and three public school superintendents, including the Superintendent of the Denver Public Schools, met to determine the framework in which this most fundamental of subjects is taught. The report of the conference will be directed primarily to the general public and to members of boards of education. The report is intended to make clear the complexity of the reading process, the component parts of reading instruction in the primary grades (including the place of phonics and that of beginning reading), and the reading program beyond the primary grades.

Objectives of Reading Instruction

The reading instruction program in the Denver Public Schools is designed with a view toward the following objectives:

1. To teach the word recognition skills necessary for children, as independent readers, to get meaning from the printed page
2. To help students develop the habit of reading so that it becomes an increasing, expanding process throughout life, thus helping them to develop personality and character
3. To stimulate the desire for and satisfaction in reading for recreation
4. To help children develop a wide range of interests in types of reading material

5. To help students develop taste in the selection of their reading materials
6. To teach the skills needed in studying in content areas
7. To develop skill in making use of ideas gained in reading. (It is primarily through asking thought questions that we give children practice in thinking and in developing this skill.)
8. To develop speed and efficiency in reading.

## II. DIMENSIONS OF READING INSTRUCTION

The process of identifying printed and written words and of getting meaning from the combinations of those words into sentences, paragraphs, and completed ideas is a complex act. This act requires certain basic skills, habits, and attitudes--each of which is essential but is only part of the interrelated complexity of perceptive reading. A balanced reading program is commonly considered to have five elements.

### Word Analysis Skills

These skills develop word recognition and must always be taught in relation to the meaning. Children must be taught to use phonics (the sounds of letters in words). Words also have a meaning derived from context; that is, the association with the meanings of other words in the sentence. For instance, the word "board" has a different meaning when one speaks of a directors' meeting than it does when one speaks of constructing a home.

Children need to learn to recognize some words by their form or shape. This enables them to identify words most often used as a whole rather than having to decipher them into parts.

Direct and functional teaching helps develop the skills of structural analysis and the use of the dictionary. This procedure helps in recognizing root words in derived words, syllabication, and pronunciation.

Vocabulary Skills

These skills include a variety of activities for developing word meaning and methods for attacking unknown words. Here, again, the dictionary is used to help teach the use of root words as clues for understanding meaning. Learning the meaning of words leads to widening horizons by studying their synonyms, antonyms and in many cases homonyms and heteronyms.

To promote even greater understanding of the use of vocabulary, multiple meanings of words are studied as are figurative words and phrases and symbolic expressions.

Comprehension Skills

These skills are concerned with understanding the thought of the printed page. The direct teaching of these skills is a vital function of reading instruction. It is primarily through asking thought questions that we give children practice in thinking and developing comprehension of materials they read. This is accomplished by helping them to identify the author's purpose for writing the material and their purpose for reading the material, and to understand ideas presented by recalling details and sequence of events. Helping children distinguish fact from opinion, make comparisons about people, places, and situations, and see relationships in likenesses and differences helps develop critical thinking.

Other methods used to develop comprehension are such procedures as instructing children in classifying information on a given topic and the use of subheads, outlining, and summarizing.

Efficient Reading

These skills concern the continual application and use of the aforementioned skills with a marked degree of quality. Efficient reading occupies, at the present time, an ever increasing place of importance. It would not be possible to discuss a well-balanced reading program without giving some attention to the place of rapid reading.

To increase their reading efficiency, children must be taught to adjust their reading rates to the kind and quality of material to be read. Skimming newspaper items is entirely different from that of quickly glancing at subheads of a chapter in a science textbook to determine the general contents of the material which must be read in greater detail and at a slower rate.

Acquiring the habits of rapid-eye fixations and practicing rapid-reading techniques concerns not only adjusting the rate of reading to material but requires directed and skillful teaching for such abilities. By continual practice and application, children must also be taught to increase their skills of comprehension and retention.

Personal and Independent Reading

By guiding children to enlarge their horizons and to develop interests in a wide variety of subjects commensurate with their maturity, teachers help in the all-round development of the reading experience of children. Allowing time for reading materials selected

by choice broadens the experiences of children and leads to the understanding that reading is a necessary and profitable function in life.

As part of a directed program, the teacher has definite responsibilities in motivating children to read freely and in selecting appropriate and diversified materials--materials which promote the development of literary appreciations and tastes and desirable attitudes toward life, and which lead to the love of reading for pleasure.

In summary--a balanced reading program will

- place emphasis on the development of word analysis, vocabulary, and comprehension skills
- give time and attention in each grade level to a program designed to increase reading rate, reading efficiency, and reading retention
- provide for direct teaching in relation to free and independent reading.

Effective teaching of reading and the learning to read will take place within the framework of a rich, vital environment--placing emphasis on individual needs and fostering the development of each individual pupil to the full extent of his potential.

The phases of this program are interrelated and require efficient planning and execution in order to develop the reading skills, habits, and attitudes necessary for effective living in today's complex world.

## III. PHASES OF THE PROGRAM IN ACTION

The elementary reading program of the Denver Public Schools has four component and interrelated stages, namely: (1) the Beginning Reading Program, (2) the Basic Reading Program, (3) the Extended Reading Program, and (4) the Applied Reading Program.

These four programs are organized as a means for including word analysis, vocabulary, comprehension, efficient reading, and free and independent reading--with emphasis on any one or all parts according to the requirements of the particular program involved.

### 1. The Beginning Reading Program

It is generally agreed that when a child first learns to read, he is learning to recognize the printed symbols for words that he already knows in spoken form and which at their first appearance will be strange to him only in printed form. A technique is needed for teaching the child a simple way to snap into his consciousness the familiar spoken word for which the strange printed form stands.

It is an early subtle processing toward an awareness of reading that focuses attention on the contribution which the home plays in the development of good readers. A child's experiences at home provide a potential for reading and determine in part his success in learning to read and his rate of progress. These experiences are built upon a background of mutual understanding between parents and children and the sharing

of ideas, conversation, and enriching events. Before he learns to read, a child should be able to listen attentively, to speak well, and to enjoy stories and books read to him.

In order that no child with an eagerness and an awareness to read is denied an opportunity to start such activities at an age heretofore thought somewhat premature, the Denver Public Schools have pioneered in two projects: (1) with parents of preschool children and (2) with teachers of kindergarten children.

It is the intent of both projects to establish as early as possible children's independence in reading comprehension and critical thinking.

2. <u>The Basic Reading Program</u>

This program is a developmental reading program using the various basic readers to teach the needed reading skills previously mentioned in this report. Use of the basic reader represents a step-by-step procedure designed to teach word analysis, vocabulary, and comprehension skills systematically and in progressive order of difficulty.

Recognizing the importance of relating ways children learn reading to the materials which they read is vital. Part--but only part--of those materials are basic readers. Basic readers are textbooks used primarily for a specific purpose: to teach children in a well-structured sequence the fundamental skills of reading.

The beginning basic readers contain the controlled vocabulary

which the children most frequently use. By using this vocabulary it makes it possible to maintain success for the beginning readers--an element which improves efficiency and creates better learning. By the repeated printed use of these spoken words, children soon realize that the printed symbol stands for what they are saying.

This type of material allows time for concentration on the skills but tends to limit content. Some people, not understanding the purpose of a basic reader, have raised questions. These concerns would be justified if the basic reader embodied the whole reading program. However, simplification of these early basic readers, coupled with the element of success for the children, soon makes it possible to progress to more difficult reading tasks.

Basic readers are used for the purpose of teaching children skills to use as tools with which to unlock new words. These texts by no means comprise the extent of a child's reading. In fact, the basic reading program must stimulate reading beyond the basic readers. Once the skills are taught, they must be presented in a variety of situations; personal reading must form an important part. Through this extension of reading experiences for which the basic program is designed, children enlarge their horizons and their vocabularies encompass thousands of words. At every level of instruction, teachers help children to read increasingly difficult materials by teaching the essential skills of word analysis, word meaning and organization, comprehension and analysis of ideas.

These skills are the tools which children use to increase their reading competence.

A program in word analysis includes all of the skills that help a child to recognize unfamiliar words. Phonics is one of the skills included. It is so highly structured and so very important that the Denver Public Schools are placing renewed stress upon phonics instruction and have three different programs in use in different situations: McKee-Harrison, "Reading with Phonics" by Hay-Wingo, and the Denver Program in Word Analysis. The reason for using three different approaches to the teaching of phonics skills arises from the heterogeneous nature of the school district's population. We are trying in all of our classrooms to meet the particular needs of children who come to school from a great diversity of backgrounds. Each of these programs is designed to help children learn and reinforce word attack skills.

It is of prime importance to understand, however, that although the three phonics programs are structured differently and present learnings to the children in different sequences, each has the identical goal--that boys and girls learn to pronounce independently (or "unlock") words. The only reason for this learning is that they may read with greater facility, comprehension, and speed.

In each of the three programs, teachers are required to survey the phonics learnings which each new class is supposed to have mastered, and to reteach or reinforce weaknesses before proceeding

to teach the next learnings in the program.

The differences in method become less important when one realizes that all three methods have an identical ultimate purpose.

The rationale of the learning pattern of the McKee-Harrison Program is based on developing understanding by moving from the general to the particular. The procedures are consistent with the emphasis on comprehension through the use of context, identification of initial consonants, and other known consonants in words which are to be unlocked. Beginning auditory training is so designed that children utilize oral sentence context as the clue to identifying missing words. Subsequent auditory and visual discrimination are taught through eighteen commonly used consonant sounds as boys and girls hear and see them initially in meaningful words. The vowel sounds are introduced later in the program.

The methods for developing competence in phonics skills in the Denver Public Schools Word Analysis Program are similar in many ways to those of the McKee-Harrison Program. There are some differences between the two programs in sequence and the time for introducing certain learnings; for example, the McKee-Harrison Program starts earlier in the child's school experience than does the Denver Word Analysis Program. Comprehension in the Word Analysis Program is constantly emphasized by having children

check through context the meanings of new words which they have produced by using currently learned initial consonants with known endings. Each new phonics learning is closely correlated with the basic reading vocabulary as an additional safeguard to insure meaning.

The rationale of the learning pattern of the Hay-Wingo Phonics Program is based upon developing understanding by beginning with the particular and moving to the general. Letter sounds are taught in isolation first in order to assure auditory acuity and visual accuracy. The introduction of the short vowel sounds first--and then the commonly used consonant sounds is compatible with this point of view. As soon as possible, the sounds are blended into words and the words are used by the children in sentences so that comprehension is achieved functionally. Intrinsic to every new phonics learning in the Hay-Wingo Program are two basic teaching principles: (1) children learn through a multi-sensory approach to hear, see, and write the sounds which they are studying, and (2) continuity and sequence are assured by basing the introduction of each new phonics element on former learnings.

Everything that children are taught within the framework of the reading lesson has as its purpose helping boys and girls to read with insight, enthusiasm, and assurance. The effective use of time for the consistent, orderly presentation of reading skills (of which phonics is but one) is the major consideration of every reading teacher.

3. The Extended Reading Program

Whereas the basic skills program operates with a close regard for grade placement of children, the extended reading program seeks to instill within the children the love of reading, the habit of reading, and the occasion to improve through use the basic reading skills they have acquired. Means of attaining that three-fold objective are the encouragement of independent reading and the extension of children's reading interests. Children often tend to read a great deal about one or two subjects. By careful planning and guidance they are introduced to many of the categories of reading material, such as biography, literature, science, fairy tales, poetry, the arts, sports, natural science, and travel as well as adventure and fiction. One of the areas best served in the intermediate grades is that of appreciation of literature.

While enlarging the vistas of children, teachers are encouraged to use a vertical rather than a horizontal approach in the use of reading materials. As soon as the children are able, they progress to materials of increasing levels of difficulty and are provided such materials as rapidly as may be consistent with a reasonable degree of mastery.

Not to be overlooked is the necessity for guiding boys and girls in the development of good taste. Children are provided frequent contacts with books which are beautifully illustrated and well-printed as well as telling an engrossing narrative.

Elements of writing style and effective use of the language are called to their attention. These are means of helping children develop the love of reading and a discriminating taste in the selection of their own reading materials.

As children progress through the grades, the opportunities for curriculum enrichment through extended reading are unlimited. They often want to read intensively on a particular problem. The teacher's task then becomes that of providing books suitable for individuals of varying reading ability and interest.

Able and ambitious pupils are usually advanced farther in reading than in any other subject. It is easy to assume therefore, that they need less reading guidance than other pupils. But children do not acquire capacity to interpret by sheer exposure to reading nor can they gain appreciation of literature incidentally. They need carefully planned guidance during periods in which they exchange ideas concerning what they have read.

Very able readers also have a tendency to want to read at a level beyond their understanding. Caution needs to be exercised in the light of the pupil's background of experience, his social maturity, and his emotional development. The significant point is that, while these facets of an able pupil's personality are likely to be further developed than usual for his age, they are almost never as far advanced as his intellectual ability. Teachers are urged also to bring to his attention books which he has not

read but which are a part of the literary heritage of children of his age.

Relative and most pertinent to an Extended Reading Program is the extensive use of library facilities. Not only is the reading program strengthened through the library program, but the school library is a base for any sound educational program. In an intensified educational program, the library assumes special importance and is a place where pupils' individual interests can be expanded and developed. In the library program as provided in the elementary schools, the following benefits are sought:

1. An increasing appreciation of the values of reading--values which are not equally available in such other forms of communication as motion pictures, television, and radio
2. Growing powers of discrimination in the selection of reading materials so that the pupil may find increasing enjoyment and intellectual enrichment through reading
3. The ability to use reading to gain insights into personal problems
4. An increasing fund of factual knowledge and the ability to use it with critical judgment in reasoning
5. An understanding of both our literary heritage

and valuable works of contemporary writers

6. A growing ability to use library resources effectively, gained from instruction in library skills and reference procedures.

In addition to library facilities in the schools, each teacher has the privilege of borrowing sets of books from the Department of Library Services. Last year alone 55,000 books were circulated by the Department for this purpose. The Denver Public Library circulated some 30,000 books in like manner to the classrooms.

The interest stimulated in reading for pleasure and information has become so great on the part of both children and parents that expansion of school and public library facilities has become urgent.

4. The Applied Reading Program

Better reading continues to be a major emphasis throughout the instructional program of the Denver Public Schools. This program, which begins in the elementary school, continues into the junior and senior high schools. It consists of the application of reading skills and knowledges to the content areas, such as social studies, science, mathematics, and the like.

All children need to learn the techniques required for reading factual material skillfully. As the difficulty of subject matter increases, demands upon reading ability increase and reading

instruction must keep pace accordingly. In each area time must be devoted to instructing children in the adaptation of basic reading skills to the specific requirements in vocabulary, structure, and organization of material characteristic of that subject field. It is important that children receive instruction for better understanding of those elements peculiar to any one field in word analysis, spelling, vocabulary, and concept development. Instruction in the use of indexes, table of contents, and other aids in locating information as well as interpreting charts and graphs is also necessary.

Four operational phases of a complete reading program have been described. Each phase has numerous ramifications. All are necessary to assure consistent progress toward the fundamental objectives of reading instruction, and all must be kept in perspective and in proper balance.

## IV. THE ORGANIZATION

### Providing Time for Reading

The demands for such a broad reading program as that just described in the four component and interrelated parts required additional time for such activities. In order to afford some twenty-five additional minutes each day for reading instruction, provision for an extended school day became effective by action of the Board of Education in September 1960.

The following chart indicates the minimum number of minutes provided each week for reading instruction in the elementary schools. This time allotment is flexible in that it may be adjusted within reasonable limits to accommodate differences in age, grade, and reading proficiency of the pupils in a given class. Such flexibility is particularly important in the kindergarten.

| | Kdg. | Grade 1 | Grade 2 | Grade 3 | Grade 4 | Grade 5 | Grade 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Reading | Experimental | 525 | 525 | 475 | 200 | 200 | 200 |
| Word Analysis | | 75 | 75 | 75 | 50 | 50 | 50 |
| Library | | Class-room Library Reading | Class-room Library Reading | Class-room Library Reading | 125 | 125 | 125 |

Providing Materials

Denver is considered a leader on the forefront of educational developments. This position of leadership carries its responsibilities. Only through continuing study and research at the growing edge of the evolving curriculum can the Denver Public Schools meet its obligations. The need for new materials to strengthen this ongoing process in the teaching of reading is of prime importance and the challenge is being met in several areas.

New textbooks and materials are presented through proper channels to the Board of Education. These have been carefully screened by a Reading Improvement Committee composed of teachers, principals, and supervisory personnel.

The Reading Improvement Committee and the Department of Curriculum Services have an obligation to recommend the development and production of instructional materials which are not available commercially. There are in use such current Denver Public Schools publications as: Highways to Better Reading, Helpful Hints for Teachers of Less Able Children, Creativity Through the Language Arts (correlated materials as aids for teacher use during unsupervised reading time), materials for use with the McKee-Harrison program, The Kindergarten Program for Hay-Wingo Phonics, and Developmental Education handbooks released by the Department of Special Education (in which reading and the language arts comprise a large portion of the described program to be used with the mentally handicapped

children). A K-12 Reading Guide, presently being written, will follow closely the program as described in this report and takes into account emerging elements in the changing concepts of reading instruction.

Making Provision For Individual Differences

The followup on the 1960 White House Conference on Children and Youth states (p.15) "The group reached agreement that the elementary school should make it possible for each child to learn continuously through (1) a rich and flexible curriculum which the teacher may adapt to individual needs of children, (2) positive guidance for each child, (3) an environment which is 'physically and mentally hygienic'."

Applied to reading, this means the rates at which children learn to read may vary just as the rates at which their bodies grow. They start to read at different times and the differences become greater as they develop and mature. Learning to read makes demands of children which require specific types of maturity in development. Not only does intellectual ability affect the ease and rapidity with which a child learns to read, but his age, health, visual perception, auditory acuity, background, and interests are also determining factors.

With these facts in mind, grouping is administered in two ways:

In most buildings, children are grouped according to ability

and reading achievement so that opportunity for progress is provided each classroom unit.

Classroom grouping is a most flexible situation. Subgrouping within the classes provides additional opportunities for further, more individualized instruction. Children may be transferred to more advanced or slower groups as their rate of progress deviates sufficiently from that of their present group in such a way that it interferes with maximum learning. In a normal school day, the child may read as an individual, as a member of a subgroup, or as a member of the whole class on items of common concern.

This process of grouping provides opportunities for the selection of materials needed for instruction according to the emphasis desired on certain basic skills commensurate with the level at which the group is reading. Working with a small number of pupils also provides for more teacher-to-pupil related instruction whereby each child may receive help according to his special requirements.

During the periods of the day when instruction is given directly to a small group, other children work independently on materials selected for strengthening and continuing the work directed within the framework of that which they study in the group situation. Workbooks are used to reinforce instruction--not as a "busy work" substitute.

An objective of the Denver Public Schools is to provide the

best materials available, sufficient both in quality and quantity to offer a constantly varying program. The Department of General Curriculum Services has just provided Creativity Through the Language Arts. This is a series of three grade-level books designed for ideas as aids to teachers for use during the unsupervised reading time. Supplementary and enrichment books are available in quantity to encourage independent reading and learning. The intelligent development and refinement of reading skills is the primary objective.

In addition to grouping children for learning experiences by classrooms and in subgroups within the classroom, special classes and programs are provided. A number of classes are provided for children with physical limitations such as loss of hearing, blindness, and the like. The reading program for less able children is adjusted to provide all possible basic essentials of reading development at a pace slower than that of a normal class.

Provision is also made for another small percentage of children who need additional phonetic training. These children are identified as those having average or above average intelligence, but who do not learn to read. These intelligent non-readers have certain significant common characteristics associated with specific language difficulties.

Teaching children in this category requires specialized training for this clinical method of approach (Grades 3-6). Remedial Training for Children with Specific Disability in Reading, Spelling,

and Penmanship by Anna Gillingha nd Bessie Stillman is being used. Several elementary teacher e been truc ed in the use of these materials and others are attending s to learn this procedure for use in their own ools. The achers are trained to instruct the intelligent non-readers on a clinical basis.

The technique used is to teach the sounds of letters and then build the letter sounds into words. This method is based upon the close association of visual, auditory, and kinesthe c elements which form what is sometimes called the "language triangle." Phonics, reading, writing, and spelling are taught concurrently in a sequentially developed program with materials in the manual or materials developed for use in conjunction with the manual.

The reading program is designed to meet individual rates of growth and development. There are many processes to embody a sequence of instruction to maintain a rate of development and to accelerate wherever possible. With the increased volume of materials to be read coupled with the pressures of an orbiting age, the need for teaching speed in reading emerges. Once basic skills are well established, training in improving the rate at which pupils read is impelling. Proper techniques for increasing the speed of reading along with mechanical devices such as the tachistoscope are presently contained in some reading classes. A look to the future indicates much wider use of these methods.

Children possessing superior academic ability are identified as the "Able and Ambitious." Certainly reading at its best is seen in the Basic Design Program for the Able and Ambitious student. In this study type of program, the regular classroom program is adjusted to omit learnings in which the child has already achieved competence and substitute learnings that will be more challenging to him. The emphasis is on a quality program, rather than a program of extra work. Applying a high degree of reading skills and techniques leads to a quality of learning appropriate to high ability.

Improving Classroom Procedures

The Reading Program in the elementary schools of Denver speaks eloquently for hard work toward a common objective. There are many component parts necessary to build a strong reading program designed to meet the requirements of all the children in the schools. Considerable planning is necessary to maintain such instruction. The key to achieving the highest possible quality of reading instruction lies in the continual improvement of teaching methods through an adequate program of inservice education. In order to make good teachers better teachers of reading so that they may be master craftsmen in all the reading skills, the Denver Public Schools have many avenues for teacher inservice education.

Teachers entering the profession need assistance in applying the theoretical bases of reading instruction to the actual classroom

situation. The college preparation of teachers needs to be applied to individual reading problems and to the realities of classroom practice. New teachers in the Denver Public Schools are provided this assistance by the school principals and the elementary coordinators.

Equally important is the need for keeping experienced teachers abreast of recent improvements in reading instruction. Inservice education helps experienced teachers become acquainted with emerging techniques of reading instruction and become aware of the findings of current reading research. Experienced teachers are helped to improve their reading instruction by the school principals and experienced reading supervisors.

Both experienced and beginning teachers are helped to improve their proficiency in the teaching of reading as it relates to a particular phonics program through inservice meetings during the week, after school, or on Saturday mornings. Each teacher also receives individual assistance in the classroom every two or three weeks by a coordinator or a teacher on special assignment.

Other avenues of instruction have been maintained by carefully structured programs on Educational Television, a Reading Institute, and faculty meetings featuring supervisory personnel as speakers.

Using Special Programs

The Denver Public Schools' Extended Reading Program has been one of its most successful projects. Through it pupils maintain

and strengthen their reading achievement. Much reading achievement is lost during the summer months unless a summer reading program is followed, and the loss is often reflected during the first weeks of school in a lower general achievement level.

For many years the Denver Public Library has had a Vacation Reading Program which has been publicized and endorsed by the Denver Public Schools.

This year it is planned to add some new dimensions to both the Public Library Program and the Denver Public Schools' Reading Improvement Program. It is the aim to have every elementary school child and his parent "sign up" for one of three reading programs--the Library Vacation program should include every school child; the Guided and Improvement programs are designed to assist children having specific reading limitations.

1. The Public Library Vacation Reading Program is designed to encourage children to earn a Summer Reading Certificate. Schools are urged to utilize to the fullest extent the cooperation of the PTA and teaching staff as well as Denver Public Library personnel and services.

   Children and parents who agree to participate in this program will receive letters during the summer to help them to sustain their determination to follow a summer reading plan.

   During the summer of 1961 some 17,000 pupils participated

in this program. Through the extended efforts by the schools this year, it is hoped that the number of children who successfully respond to public library reading will be more than doubled.

School programs will be planned for the early fall, at which time recognition will be given to those children who have met the requirements for receiving a Summer Reading Certificate.

For several years the Denver Public Schools have offered at one elementary school a six-weeks summer program for reading improvement. The success of the program and the response to it have been so great that this year there will be four such Elementary Reading Centers located in four widely separated parts of the city. There will be two distinct programs at each Center for pupils having completed Grade 3, 4, 5, or 6 as of June 1962: (1) The Reading Improvement Program for those children reading below grade level, (2) The Guided Reading Program for children who are reluctant readers--those who read only that which is assigned, but who have the potential for reading much more.

The Reading Improvement Program will accommodate one hundred eighty pupils at each Center each week day morning. Intensive reading instruction is planned in the various classes.

Another one hundred children in the Guided Reading Program of each Center will be given group and individual guidance once a week in order to help them become enthusiastic readers. They will be permitted to borrow books from the School Center Library and they will be encouraged to read books from the Public Library.

It is important to recognize that participation in the two reading programs of each Center provides not only reading improvement for children but an opportunity for fifty-two teachers to grow in their abilities to teach reading. These teachers will have access to new materials and opportunities for learning new techniques to strengthen their teaching. It is hoped that these teachers will become resource people for the teaching of reading in their respective assignments in the fall.

In addition, there will be some thirty-six teacher assistants at one Center operated in cooperation with the University of Denver. These teachers will be experienced and may receive graduate credit for the assistantships.

The combined programs of the four Centers and the effect on the personnel involved in them can result in an improved reading experience for some 3,830 children during the school year 1962-63.

## V. THE SUM OF THE PARTS

Many compelling reasons are to be found in the conditions of our time for raising the level and improving the quality of education of the American people. The principal means to this end must be the strengthening of reading instruction. It must, however, be recognized that reading instruction has been more thoroughly analyzed and more intensively investigated by scholars and research people than any other subject in the school curriculum. Over the years, as evidenced by the fact that Americans are now an almost wholly literate people, probably no other subject has been so consistently and so successfully taught in American schools. It therefore is a major undertaking to modify reading instruction and to improve upon the established reading program.

Just as reading is used by the citizen of today's world in a variety of ways for many purposes, so reading instruction in the schools must encompass a number of teaching and learning procedures, each of which has its own importance and makes its own contribution to the success of the total program. In the Denver Public Schools, reading instruction is being advanced along four broad fronts.

1. The Beginning Reading Program is designed to provide boys and girls an earlier and more successful start in reading. New procedures and new materials for use both in the classroom and in the home are utilized to attain this objective.

2. The Basic Reading Program, utilizing the reading textbook, enables children to acquire systematically and in an orderly sequence the essential skills required for effective reading. Here both the mechanical skills (such as phonics and word analysis and the techniques of rapid reading) and the skills of understanding (such as word meaning and recall and interpretation) are taught thoroughly and in progressive levels of difficulty.

3. The Extended Reading Program is used to fix the habit of reading, to increase the love of reading, and to utilize and to sharpen the skills of reading which have been first taught in the Basic Reading Program. Under careful guidance and with suitable incentives, pupils are helped to deepen their interests, broaden their range of vicarious experience, and increase not only their vocabulary but their store of knowledge.

4. In the Applied Reading Program pupils are taught to apply their skill and power in reading to their study of the content fields. Those particular uses of reading competence which are applicable to the study of science, of mathematics, of social studies, and other subjects are taught as a part of their education in those fields.

Each of these four elements of a comprehensive and adequate program of reading instruction has its own components, requiring

specialized content, methods, and materials of instruction. Each of these components is necessary to the effective operation of the entire program, and therefore the reading program is necessarily one of many and varied facets. Consequently, no single measure for improving the whole reading program can be any more acceptable than is a nostrum in the field of medicine.

It is, rather, imperative that the schools' efforts to strengthen instruction in reading be applied to all aspects of the task in order that a comprehensive, well-balanced, and fully-effective program of reading may be the outcome.